

CITY OF SEATTLE

2010 State Legislative Agenda

MAYOR

Michael Patrick McGinn

CITY COUNCIL

Richard Conlin, Council President

Sally Bagshaw

Tim Burgess

Sally J. Clark

Jean Godden

Bruce Harrell

Nick Licata

Michael O'Brien

Tom Rasmussen

STATE TEAM

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

Marco Lowe, Acting Director

Linda Cannon, Deputy Director

Craig Engelking, State Legislative Director

Tim Gugerty, State Legislative Liaison

SESSION PRIORITIES – 2010

Budget Safety Net: Do No Harm

Periods of economic downturn affect people from every walk of life, but their effects are felt most keenly by the vulnerable. Despite budget deficits at every level of government, preserving the basic safety net of services becomes a paramount civic responsibility. Preservation of these vital services makes both social and fiscal sense: residents dependent on these programs merely turn to a number of other services, which is often an inefficient and ultimately more costly solution. Seattle believes that the State should allow no further cuts to human services, public health, or the Housing Trust Fund.

Education

We believe it is the State's responsibility to fully fund K-12 education, and to implement programs that close the achievement gap. We support enhanced and stable funding for arts in public education. We also believe that the provision of state-wide, universal pre-K instruction assures that all children enter elementary school ready to learn. During challenging economic times, it is also particularly important to support community colleges, technical colleges, and state universities as they provide access to retraining and workforce development opportunities. Public educational institutions are also a major employer in Seattle and across Washington State and have a considerable impact on our economy.

The state constitution mandates the State to provide K-12 education for all children, including special needs children. Although the City of Seattle does not operate, manage, or fund public education, successful public schools are the heart of our neighborhoods and a quality education for all students is key to the social and economic vitality of our city and state. We are committed to the success of our Seattle schools and believe the State should continue to provide for the full funding of K-12 education.

Public Safety

We strive to ensure all people feel safe and protected in their homes, businesses, and on our streets. We would support a statewide ban on military-style assault weapons and the creation of a data collection and reporting system to determine what percentage of violent deaths are caused by these and other weapons. We also believe that local governments should have the ability to regulate firearms or weapons in public areas to ensure the safety of their communities and local circumstances. We also support early intervention in juvenile possession of illegal firearms, and believe proactive detention for juvenile offenses can deter potential future convictions under the more severe adult sanctions. We believe that cooperative, community-oriented policing plays a primary role in maintaining safe and balanced communities and that the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative partnership between the Department of Corrections and local law enforcement should be fully funded.

Revenue

We strongly support maintaining current municipal revenue authority and existing city and state shared revenues. We, in concert with the Association of Washington Cities,

support a broad city flexibility package that provides greater flexibility with existing revenues and local determination of how these revenues are allocated. We do not support unfunded mandates. Seattle also supports comprehensive reform of the Washington State tax system to provide revenue stability for cities and counties and a more progressive state tax structure, including consideration of a constitutional amendment to establish a state income tax.

Transportation

We believe that a well-maintained and supported transportation system is critical in advancing economic prosperity, meaningfully reducing greenhouse gas levels, and accommodating projected population growth in a sustainable manner. We support efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled and to promote increased use of new and existing tools to move people and goods through cleaner, more efficient choices. We believe the State should fully fund the transportation infrastructure system, particularly when there is an identified safety risk. The State should also play an increased role in funding transit and transportation choices as part of our state system. We support legislative efforts to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, including the Safe Routes to School program and Complete Streets policies. Seattle also values a variety of transportation options to support the local economy and tourism industry and is committed to ensure that those options are safe for all the traveling public. To that end, we seek legislation that will restore local regulatory oversight and enforcement over towncars and limousines, as existed in the past.

The State should support local tools to reduce congestion through strategic investments, like additional flexibility in the Transportation Benefit District statute, restoration of the Public Works Trust Fund, and the GTEC and TRPP components of Commute Trip Reduction. Seattle concurs with the Association of Washington Cities that cities need a permanent transportation funding source for basic street maintenance and preservation. We support legislation that would create a street maintenance utility that would charge different user classifications based on trips generated and a city's cost to maintain and preserve its existing system. Seattle also supports strategies to enhance local enforcement of traffic laws, such as revised unlawful transit conduct statutes and stricter fare enforcement to ensure security and safety on transit. We support moving forward on the deep-bore tunnel as the preferred alternative for replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and upholding the responsibilities set forth in the Viaduct Memorandum of Agreement (Seattle Ord. 123133). As the project manager for the deep-bore tunnel, the State has the role to implement the project on time and on budget. We will continue to work with the State on design and cost estimation of the tunnel to assist in this effort. We also support other investments funded by the Nickel Package and Transportation Partnership Account. We support efforts to develop a full funding package for replacement of SR 520. Seattle supports tolling and congestion pricing as a demand management tool and encourages development of a regional pricing system to help fund transportation alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. We support improved efficiency and oversight in licensing, including the administration of disabled parking placards and the transfer of vehicle ownership and registration.

Water Stewardship

We concur with the Association of Washington Cities that a long-term state funding mechanism for local stormwater management programs is necessary to ensure full implementation of stormwater management programs and requirements and to achieve water quality standards. Seattle supports legislation that would establish a fee on a barrel of unrefined oil to raise revenue for stormwater and water quality programs and projects. We also support stormwater management programs that set goals which are achievable and not cost-prohibitive. We support the responsible use of water and promote environmental stewardship, including funding for salmon recovery. We support legislative efforts to address a variety of water issues, including in-stream flows, protection of municipal water rights, disputes over water rights, and implementation of watershed planning. We support maintaining current funding for priority environmental programs related to water quality. We support the Puget Sound Partnership's efforts to restore and protect the health of Puget Sound.

ONGOING PRIORITIES – 2010

The policy statements below represent ongoing priorities for the City of Seattle and its residents. The City urges the State Legislature to initiate and support legislation that advances the following principles:

Race & Social Justice

Every person has the right to live, work, and learn free from discrimination. We support local discretion with regard to implementing I-200 restrictions in both education and employment opportunities. We support legislation that prevents discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, and lending practices. We also support efforts to reduce racial disproportionality and promote racial justice in the areas of economic equity, environmental justice, criminal justice, health equity, education equity, and in government policies, programs, and procedures.

Climate Protection & Environment

We believe all levels of government should implement practices and policies that provide for strong climate protection and that mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. We support flexible state funding for local government efforts to combat climate disruption. We support measures to mitigate the impact of increased energy costs to lower income households. Seattle supports a hard cap on greenhouse gas emissions and supports the aggressive implementation of a cap-and-trade program. We believe the State should assert leadership through bold policy implementation to ensure we are well positioned when the federal government takes action.

Economic Development

We support state efforts to provide local governments with financing tools and to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers in order to attract and retain businesses. We also support incentives that promote increased job and apprenticeship opportunities, wage progression, and retention for workers. We encourage efforts aimed at increasing the participation of Women and Minority Business Enterprises (WMBE) in state and local contracting. We support efforts to enhance our tourism industry, including performing arts and cultural organizations and institutions. Seattle supports a safe and vibrant nighttime economy and mechanisms to help it thrive.

Elections and General Government

We believe the State of Washington should finance all elections related to state government and state offices. We support efforts to facilitate the secure use of electronic signatures for local governments. We support local governance structures that provide clarity and flexibility among jurisdictions to meet requirements, such as open public meetings, in a way that reflects the organizational structure of the jurisdiction and does not interfere with public access. Seattle feels strongly that the State should not pre-empt or otherwise prohibit local governments from establishing local policies that address their own diverse communities' needs and priorities.

Energy

We support policies that help us continue producing and delivering environmentally responsible, safe, low-cost, reliable power. We support the development of a long-term energy strategy that includes planning for adequate energy capacity and supply. We also support measures which assist in our continued ability to meet our zero greenhouse gas emissions goal. We support the inclusion of low-impact hydroelectric power as a renewable energy source in any legislation related to renewable energy portfolio standards as well as equal treatment among the publicly owned utilities.

We support opportunities for greater enforcement of building codes to ensure energy efficiency, and a balanced system of incentives and fees to promote innovations in energy efficiency. We also support increased opportunities for solar production as well as an expanded role for zero-emission vehicles. We believe that new technology jobs are critical to a strong green economy.

Growth Management, Land Use and Annexation

We support the Growth Management Act (GMA) as the primary means of planning for growth. We support the further integration and streamlining of state land use and related statutes while preserving environmental protections. We support better integration of land use and transportation.

We support efforts to provide local governments with tools to implement “growth pays for growth” policies. We support state funding to assist jurisdictions in meeting planning requirements and infrastructure needs of the Growth Management Act and the Shoreline Management Act.

Hazardous and Solid Waste

We support measures to reduce toxins entering the waste stream and support cleaning up hazardous waste sites through state assistance to local governments for the handling, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials.

We support development of common industry standards for recycled products, funding for recycling facilities, promotion of product stewardship, and legislative initiatives to reduce waste and increase recycling. Specifically, we support product stewardship for fluorescent lighting products and surplus pharmaceuticals, as well as framework legislation to ensure manufacturers’ responsibility for waste products, such as fluorescents, paint, and carpeting. We also support the creation of a Do Not Mail Registry that would allow residents of Washington State to opt out of receiving unsolicited commercial mailings, which burden our waste disposal systems and recycling capacity.

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

We support efforts to protect the public from terrorist threats and believe funding should be based on threat and risk assessments, both foreign and domestic. It is also critical that the State implement measures and provide funding to prepare our communities for natural disasters. We support legislation that protects information regarding emergency

preparedness and critical infrastructure. We support additional local tools to generate resources for fire and emergency management levies. We support efforts to balance the need to effectively combat terrorism while protecting civil liberties and freedoms.

Homelessness

Seattle continues to work with other local jurisdictions and the State to help assure appropriate financial participation by all levels of government for critical human services. To that end, Seattle supports State efforts to assist with the implementation of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness including:

- Measures to require state institutions, including the Department of Corrections, and the foster care system to create informed and responsible discharge practices;
- Measures to facilitate development of low-income and affordable housing; and
- Efforts to use existing funds more efficiently, working to fund provision of services and housing in a coordinated fashion.

Housing

Seattle believes that housing—its availability and affordability—is critical to the quality of life of our residents and neighborhoods. We seek to restore state resources for the Housing Trust Fund at \$200 million per biennium. We also support resources for transitional and short-term rent programs for those who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and for increased hospitalization opportunities for the mentally ill. We support policies to stem foreclosures in the region and enhance both counseling and data collection. With continued strong population growth in the region and an uncertain housing market, we support housing financing tools to help provide adequate housing opportunities for all.

Human Services

We strongly support maintaining and enhancing state funding for critical human services programs, and identifying opportunities for self-sufficiency, poverty relief, and upward mobility. We believe that preserving the human services safety net, including General Assistance-Unemployable, the Basic Health Plan, and the Apple Health Children's Health Insurance Program, is essential to supporting our vulnerable populations and maintaining healthy communities. We support the protection of services and resources for senior citizens and people with disabilities. We support improving child care subsidy policies and professional development coordination to improve the quality of early education, pre-school, and after-school programs. Seattle also continues to support the legislative goals of the Area Agency on Aging.

Infrastructure/Finance

Seattle believes that growth and density in the region should be focused in urban areas, which will require infrastructure improvements and community amenities to accommodate the expected increase. To meet this goal Seattle supports local control and flexibility in funding sources and additional tools to help attract people, businesses and jobs to the City and State. This includes:

- Further clarification that cities can enact a use tax on brokered natural gas;
- Maintaining and improving Seattle Center as a vibrant regional attraction; and
- Extension of the hotel/motel tax sunset for arts and culture in King County in 2020 and beyond, and the authority to spend down the arts endowment between 2013 and 2020.

Law & Criminal Justice

We support holding offenders accountable while striving to relieve demands on the adult and juvenile justice systems. We support changes to existing law to allow a local jurisdiction to employ a local ordinance that defines assault by vehicle as committing a traffic infraction that kills or seriously injures a person. We also support safeguards for protected groups from harassment and violence through misuse of the Public Records Act. In addition, we support reclassifying possession of small amounts of marijuana from a misdemeanor to a civil infraction. We also support immunity from prosecution for illegal drug possession for persons who witness or experience drug overdoses and call for medical assistance.

Libraries

Seattle supports increased financial stability for public libraries, including changes to State law that would allow Seattle to establish a library district or other alternative mechanisms to provide dedicated library funding for The Seattle Public Library. Seattle supports open access for all users to all library materials in a variety of formats. Seattle opposes the elimination of any Washington State Library programs and services as a budget reduction measure.

Parks

Preserving and protecting our natural resources is a major tenet in maintaining an urban quality of life. We encourage efforts to preserve and strengthen state support for parks, recreation, and open space programs. We also support tools to improve the vitality of and access to the Washington Park Arboretum, Woodland Park Zoo, and Seattle Aquarium.

Planning & Development

We support clarification that would allow courts to issue civil administrative warrants for conducting housing, property, and health inspections in order to enforce the City's codes. We oppose efforts to diminish current authority to access property for public safety and other business purposes. Seattle believes in the right to impose fees to fund necessary facilities and services related to the impacts of development and to require

appropriate infrastructure such as open space and sidewalks associated with new development.

Public Health

It is critical that a stable, long term revenue source be identified for public health. We support efforts to ensure all persons have accessible, affordable, and culturally competent health care, and to ensure that the Basic Health Plan continues to play a vital role. We believe all persons in Washington State should have access to affordable prescription drug coverage, alcohol and substance abuse treatment, comprehensive mental health, and dental health services. We also support identifying enhanced and stable funding for drug and alcohol treatment programs.

Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence

We are committed to ending domestic violence and sexual assault for our residents. We support the provision of services, financial assistance, and other resources to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in order to support their safety and ability to leave abusive relationships. We also support improved standards, accountability, and monitoring for domestic violence perpetrator programs.

Sustainable Farming and Healthy Food

We support efforts to establish sustainable food and farming systems, increase food security, and improve access to healthy food for all people. We support food policies that encourage the use of renewable energy resources, minimize energy use and waste, develop new markets for farmers, promote sustainable agricultural systems and farmland management, preserve farmland, and assist small farmers and farm laborers. We support the establishment of a State Food Policy Council that develops, recommends, and coordinates food system policies.

Telecommunications and Cable

Seattle is committed to ensuring all residents are provided affordable, equitable access to telecom and cable services through competition and consumer protection. Seattle supports preserving local franchising authority to assure local control of our rights of way, the ability to guarantee the highest consumer protection standards, protection of local revenue, build-out requirements in all communities, and sufficient public, educational and government access channels. We oppose legislation that diminishes these priorities. We also oppose legislation that would diminish cities' existing authority to construct and operate a municipal broadband network serving the public.

Tribal Governments

We respect and uphold the unique sovereign status of tribes. We understand their treaty rights, the importance of their efforts to create a sufficient tax base, and their reliance on specific sources of revenue to operate programs for the benefit of their people.